

County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

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On the Roads Again...

Several projects aimed toward a smoother, safer ride on Lumpkin County roads are on the books between now and year's end, according to Public Works director Charles Trammell. Thanks to aggressive pursuit of grant monies, these projects will be completed with little or no county funding:

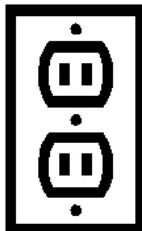
- Center and edge line striping on over 100 miles of road and improvements at 15 different intersections. The county will pay for the \$200,000 Off-System Safety Improvement projects, and will be fully reimbursed by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

- Paving of Dicks Waters Creek Road, Wash Rider Road, John Henry Shoffeitt Road and Rail Hill Road will start any day if it hasn't already, with the county paying only about 18 percent of the tab—that's about \$62,000 of the \$350,000 total cost. State funds will cover the majority of the project costs through the Local Assistance Road Program (LARP).

- Refurbishing of the Copper Mine Road and Garnett School Road bridges will get started soon. These projects also will be covered by the state at no cost to the county.

Jackson EMC Waives Cost

Keeping costs in check for the new county maintenance shop and recycling center under construction on Red Oak Flats Road is proving to be a challenge. But the county got a major assist recently from Jackson EMC, which includes the Red Oak Flats industrial corridor in its 10-county northeast Georgia service area. Commissioner Steve Gooch and Public Works director Charles Trammell met with a company representative to discuss costs for installation of the underground power lines to serve the two county buildings, hoping the bill could be adjusted downward. Jackson EMC's Doug Smith managed to have the entire \$15,000 cost of the project waived. Three cheers for Jackson EMC!



Happy Trails!

Lumpkin County has been awarded a \$104,000 grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for Phase III of its ongoing Trails Project. This grant follows two others, the first of which kicked off development of the trails at Yahoola Creek Park, slated for completion this year.

Administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the grants are flexible so the second and third phases can be designed around needs identified once the Yahoola Creek Reservoir and surrounding land issues are settled. A trails committee, a subcommittee of the Lumpkin County Parks and Recreation Board, invites community involvement in the trails projects. The most pressing immediate need is for help building a pavilion, outdoor classrooms and a restroom facility. Want to help? Call Mark French, Lumpkin County grants administrator, at 864-3742.



"Pumped" About Gift

When Forsyth County Fire Chief Danny Bowman found his department had outgrown a 1988 two-seat cab, 1,000 gallon pumper fire truck, he had several options for the surplus property. He and the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners chose simply to give the truck to Lumpkin County.

Lumpkin County Fire Chief Ed Eggert says the department is grateful for the recent gift, which was already road worthy, partially equipped and offered double the capacity and pumping speed of one of the county's existing pumper trucks. The vehicle, which would have cost about \$150,000 new—without the equipment—immediately was put into service. The generous act is a great example of the regional cooperation and relationship-building that increasingly is becoming part of the business of local government today. Thanks, Forsyth!



Pass the Aspirin... It's Budget Time

Lumpkin County department heads, top administrators and the Board of Commissioners continue to wrestle with a very difficult 2006 budget. No department has emerged unscathed from several rounds of budget cuts, yet a tax increase is virtually certain to cover financial obligations associated with the Yahoola Creek Reservoir and to meet the ever-increasing financial demands of doing business as a county government. One example of the rising cost of doing business: a 30 percent increase in the cost of employee health insurance. That's \$300,000! Watch for budget and public hearing information in The Dahlonega Nugget.

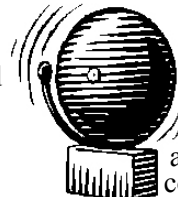


Prison Labor Saves Money

Through a contract with the Georgia Department of Corrections, Lumpkin County for several years has employed the services of low security inmates from the Colwell Probation Detention Center in Union County. They help with construction, maintenance, clean-up and other duties related to public roads and facilities, at just \$36,000 a year for a nine person crew. The Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners recently voted not only to continue participating in the work detail program; but also to apply for a second crew for 2006.

Meet Me After School!

School is back in session, and for working parents, after school child care can be a concern. The Lumpkin County Parks and Recreation Department comes to the rescue again this year with After School Programs at each of the county's three elementary schools. Programs, designed for first through eighth graders, offer homework help, snacks, arts and crafts projects, sports and games from 3pm-6pm on school days. For details call Andy Brand at 864-3622.



Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

Voting Notes

Lumpkin County citizens soon will vote on a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) referendum and a homestead exemption act. With polling places changing in over half the county's precincts and pending changes in state elections laws, keeping citizens informed is a challenge for Lumpkin County registrar and elections supervisor Kimberly Pruitt, who offers these notes:



- The special election is set for Tuesday, Sept. 20. Absentee voting, an option for those meeting specific requirements, is available by mail now thru Sept. 16. (Go by the Election & Registration office in the county courthouse or go to <http://www.sos.state.ga.us/elections/elections/voterinformation/absentee.htm> for eligibility details and an application.) In-person absentee voting takes place Sept 12-16 at the elections office.

- Advance voting, requiring no excuse, will take place through Friday, Sept. 16 during business hours at the sixth grade school gymnasium lobby.

- Voting locations of 8 of the county's 15 precincts have been changed, partly to begin complying with new handicapped accessibility requirements on the horizon. Many of the postcards mailed recently to voters whose polling places have changed were returned due to incorrect mailing addresses. If you think your polling location has changed but you didn't receive a postcard, call the Elections Office.

- Registrar Kimberly Pruitt and deputy registrar Cindy Foley have been working feverishly to update incorrect addresses on the voter rosters. If you think the Registrar's Office may not have your current address, or if you believe you've been assigned to the wrong precinct for your address, please call get the records straight! (You are required to notify the Lumpkin County Board of Registrars of your new address if you change residences within the county.) To check your polling place, visit www.sos.state.ga.us.

- Don't forget: Government-issued photo identification *may be required*, if the U.S. Department of Justice approves Georgia's recently-passed House Bill 244 and does so before Sept. 20 (response is expected by Sept. 30). If the new law is *not* approved before the election, various means of identification still will be accepted, including a utility bill, bank statement or government check showing the voter's name and address, or a voter can swear to his or her identity under oath.

Incidentally, September's special election will cost the county almost \$15,000...an expense that wasn't planned for when the 2005 budget was set.

Lumpkin Joins Watershed Study

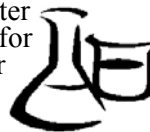
Lumpkin County and the Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority recently joined in a watershed-wide project to monitor, assess and improve water quality in the Upper Etowah River Watershed and Lake Allatoona. After measuring water flows, testing for pollutants and cataloging life



forms, participating agencies will use their findings to develop measures in each county to protect the river while allowing continued growth. Lumpkin has committed over the next six years about \$250,000 worth of in-kind services to the regional study, the first of its kind in the Southeast.

Water Systems A-OK

The Lumpkin County Water and Sewerage Authority has reported the water provided through the county's 11 community water systems met or exceeded all safety and quality standards set by the state of Georgia and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Water Quality Reports for each of the water systems, including important monitoring and testing results, along with general information about safe drinking water, are available at the authority's offices in Annex A, behind the county courthouse. Call 867-6580 for information.



Boot Drive for MDA

Lumpkin County firefighters holding their boots out to passing motorists between 10am and 3pm August 27 and



28 won't be showing off the hottest foot fashions. They'll be collecting donations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Fire trucks will be staged, as available, at collection points—the Wal-Mart intersection, Turner's Corner, and the intersection of 400 and 60—to draw attention to the effort. Last year's Boot Drive raised more than \$7,000.

Board Adopts New Septic System Rules

The Lumpkin County Board of Health has established new septic system permit requirements for single family homes not being built in subdivisions. Soil analysis by a certified soil classifier is now required before septic tank permits can be issued. The new requirements, which already applied to subdivisions, were put into place for several reasons. First, the local health department staff doesn't have the time or expertise to carry out the evaluations according to state policy. While board members struggled with adding extra cost—\$300-\$500—to the price of building a home, most said having qualified professionals collect and analyze the site data is in the best interest of homeowners and will help prevent environmental problems caused by septic tank failures. Liability issues also factored into the decision. In Lumpkin County's 13-county health department district, all but Lumpkin and three other counties already had similar soil analysis requirements. For information call 867-2730.



Just Call or Click!

If you have questions or concerns about your county government, answers or assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., www.lumpkincounty.gov or call 864-3742.

County Commission

Steve Gooch, Chairman
Dr. John Raber, District 1
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2
Clarence Stowers, District 3
Marvin Martin, District 4

Stan Kelley
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